

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8254

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: BHUTTO TOURS BALUCHISTAN

1. FOLLOWING A LONG WEEKEND IN LARKANA DEVOTED TO PROVINCIAL POLITICS, LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS, AND MEETING THE PPP FAITHFUL, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO FLEW TO QUETTA JULY 23 TO BEGIN A TWELVE-DAY TOUR OF BALUCHISTAN. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY THE GOVERNOR, CHIEF MINISTER, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL BALUCH LEGISLATORS, TRIBAL SARDARS, AND OTHER NOTABLES INCLUDING EX-CHIEF MINISTER KHAR OF PUNJAB. THE LOCAL PPP HAD GARLANDED THE SEVEN-MILE ROUTE TO THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AND ASSURED A FAIR TOURNOUT OF THE POPULACE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. SECTION 144 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE, PROHIBITING THE CARRYING OF WEAPONS, HAD EARLIER BEEN PUT IN FORCE IN QUETTA.

2. THE BALUCHISTJE TOUR, PUBLICIZED AS A "MEET THE PEOPLE" SWING, WILL BE THE MOST EXTENSIVE THERE BY THE PRIME MINISTER SINCE HE ASSUMED OFFICE AND WILL REPORTEDLY TAKE HIM TO SOME AREAS NOT PREVIOUSLY VISITED BY A HEAD OF GOVERN-
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MENT. HIS ITINERARY CALLS FOR THE INSPECTION OF VARIOUS PUBLIC

WORKS PROJECTS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS IN BORDER AREAS (CHAMAN, CHAGAI, FORT SANDEMAN) AND AT TOWNS IN "DISTURBED AREAS" (DERA BUGTI, KOHLU, MAIWAND). THE PRIME MINISTER PLANS TO MEET TRIBAL LEADERS AT ZIARAT, ADDRESS A PUBLIC MEETING IN QUETTA AUGUST 2 AFTER FRIDAY PRAYERS, AND LEAVE BALUCHISTAN THE FOLLOWING DAY.

3. COMMENT: THE BALUCHISTAN TOUR SEEMS A LOGICAL SEQUEL TO BHUTTO'S FRONTIER VISIT, DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AND BURNISH HIS IMAGE BY APPEALING DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE OVER THE HEADS OF THEIR TRADITIONAL LEADERS. THE PHYSICAL COURAGE DEMONSTRATED BY HIS VISITING "DISTURBED AREAS" MAY WELL IMPRESS THE BACKWARD BLAUCH. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT BHUTTO WILL REPEAT IN BALUCHISTAN THE SIMPLISTIC NATIONALIST, ANTI-WALI KHAN, ANTI-AFGHAN THEMES WHICH MARKED HIS FRONTIER TOUR. WITH WHAT ENERGY HE CARRIES HIS ATTACK ON THE FEUDAL SARDARI SYSTEM INTO ITS HOMELAND WILL BE WORTH WATCHING; SOME KARACHI OBSERVERS SEE A POSSIBILITY THAT THE TOUR WILL LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR "A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO A POLITICAL PROBLEM".

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